



Fashion business

While the debt crisis, recession and job loss have dampened the mood at foreign fashion shows, China Fashion Week has been as festive as ever.

For designers from around the world, the week is a chance to make their mark on China and tap into its market of 1.3 billion willing buyers.

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Photo by Feng Li/
Getty Images



Survey finds
China's boys
falling behind

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Educators mull 'boys' schools' to even college entrance



A survey has found that modern boys are competitive neither academically nor athletically with their girl peers, and that they furthermore have serious problems fitting in with society. **An Xin/CFP Photo**

By Zhao Hongyi

In recent years, teen boys have been falling behind their female classmates both physically and mentally. School officials hoping to reverse the trend are planning to open new "boys' schools" that would train young men to adapt to China's rapidly changing society.

The first of these schools would be established in Shanghai's Huangpu district by East China Normal University if approved by the bureau of education.

But many in the public and media doubt whether lessons in manliness are enough to solve the nation's problems.

Shanghai's No. 8 High School could be China's first to specialize in boys' education if a new project is approved, said Lu Qishen, the school's principal.

The new curriculum would add classes in boxing, chess and electronic music to boost students' logical and analytical ability, as well as their charisma and willpower. The goal would be to produce a generation of independent, creative, competitive, responsible and cooperative boys, Lu said.

"We want to build something like a Chinese Eton College," he said.

The Report on Teen Growth Index prepared by the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences in 2009 found that girls significantly outpaced boys in school, family and social life, and were equal in physical growth. In fact, it was only in psychological tests that

boys came out ahead.

"Chinese boys are experiencing a developmental crisis," the report said. "They are competitive neither academically nor athletically, and furthermore have serious problems fitting in with society."

"The picture is almost the same across the country," said Yang Xiongze, director of the Institute of Teenage Studies, which prepared the report.

One of the most prominent examples of the disparity can be seen in the new system that allows schools to recommend students to universities.

The system, implemented in 2010 and led by Peking University, has resulted in the nomination of girl students more than 90 percent of the time.

Traditionally, boys were assumed to excel in science and engineering while girls excel in social sciences and liberal arts. However, the recommendation system found that girls are more qualified to study engineering as well.

"We have a strict examination and testing system in place that guides our recommendations," said Huang Hanjun, vice president of Nanya Middle School in Changsha, Hunan Province. The school is one of the most famous high schools in the country, with the majority of its students continuing on to university study.

Another cause, many observers say, is the gradual decline in difficulty of the national university

entrance exam.

"Boys are believed to be active in thinking and good at solving difficult problems, but they are also easy to upset," said Luo Xiangping, an education scholar at Beijing Normal University. "Girls are more patient and capable of finishing schoolwork and exams."

With the national entrance exams becoming easier, they are giving girls who are better at passing exams an edge in college admissions.

Traditionally, Chinese families used to focus their education efforts on their sons rather than their daughters. The tradition continues today, when many parents refuse to let their children participate in sports, social events and military exercises.

"This prevents the boys from experiencing exercise and responsibility," Luo said.

But Xiong Bingqi, an educational researcher, disagrees.

"The uneven results were a symptom of our very ill high school education system that emphasizes raising students' scores rather than raising students. What is needed is an overall approach to education," he said.

Separating boys and girls into different schools would undo the positive progress that has resulted from more than a century of co-education.

"Family, campus and social education are all necessary to give children a more comprehensive education – rote academic memorization can only take them so far," Xiong said.

Brief

Wolf or husky

Police in Shandong Province are trying to resolve a case of mistaken identity in which man's best friend was confused with a dangerous wild animal.

A suspected killer wolf caught by police will be given a DNA test after a man came forward to claim ownership of the animal, which he says is his pet husky.

The white-coated animal was caught last Friday in a small town in Shandong and identified by a local zoo as a 5-year-old female wolf. Police believe it was responsible for attacks on seven people, two of whom died. However, a local man surnamed Wang said it was his pet dog "Lady" after recognizing her in a news photo.

Local zookeepers said the animal howled like a wolf and possessed other wolf-like characteristics. On Monday, an animal expert determined that the animal is a husky. Wang says he's been in contact with the zoo and police and hopes to get his dog back as soon as possible.

Youngest professor is 22

Central South University (CSU) in Changsha has announced that Liu Lu, a 22-year-old mathematics undergraduate student, has been appointed as the university's newest professor.

The appointment made Liu the youngest professor in the country. He will receive 1 million yuan in rewards, half of which is intended to go towards carrying out scientific research and the other half for improving his living conditions.

However, a respected mathematician who wants to remain anonymous stated that the decision was ridiculous.

Tang Tao, a professor of the Mathematics Department at the Hong Kong Baptist University, said that the media and academia need to put Liu's appointment into perspective. While some financial rewards are necessary, anything more than that – including his newfound fame – could burden his academic career.

Previous cases similar to Liu's have aroused much debate and suspicion, including the news of a young government employee being given the title of director-in-chief. Some netizens criticized the decision as irresponsible and stated that it should be avoided in the future.

Liu came to fame after solving the Seetapun Enigma, a notoriously difficult mathematical problem first raised by British mathematician David Seetapun. Three scholars from the Chinese Academy of Sciences appealed for Liu to undertake PhD study without going through examinations. Liu is nicknamed "little Chen Jingrun," after the most famous mathematician in China.

(Agencies)

The 'red' conspiracy

Faux bordeaux wines stir market



A visitor tests a wine at a spirits exhibition.

Wen Lei/IC Photo

Master of Wine Jeannie Cho Lee could tell instantly when she tasted fake wine at a Hong Kong dinner party.

"Just from the color and the nose, once you taste it, it was confirmation that it wasn't the genuine wine," she said.

But not everyone possesses Lee's acumen. The country's booming appetite for fine wine in recent years has fueled a rampant counterfeit market that industry insiders fear could be turning local buyers off.

"What we're seeing across the country is a proliferation of knock-offs and copycats and outright counterfeit as the imported wine industry really explodes in this market," said Ian Ford of Summergate Fine Wines in Shanghai, adding that counterfeiters are taking advantage of inexperienced Chinese consumers.

The country has become the world's fifth-largest consumer of wine, ahead of Britain. It forecasts 54 percent growth from 2011 to 2015 – the equivalent of a billion more bottles.

That means supply and demand in the Chinese market can have a significant impact on global prices.

The cost of high-end wines was down more than 20 percent year-on-year in late February, according to the Liv-ex 50 Index, which tracks bordeaux

wines. The plunge has been attributed to a range of factors, including a pull-back following a strong surge in prices and market turmoil in Europe.

Some believe fake wines may have played a role by denting Chinese consumers' confidence in the product.

"It has definitely been a contributing factor because there has been a drop-off in demand for some of the wines which have been particularly affected by counterfeits – for example, Lafite Rothschild," said Thomas Gearing of Cult Wines, a London wine investment firm.

"As someone gets their fingers burnt by buying counterfeit wine, they are going to lose their desire to continually buy that wine."

A particularly popular label in China, Chateau Lafite Rothschild, is one example. Favored as an expensive gift on the mainland, a bottle of the bordeaux red can retail anywhere from \$1,000 (6,300 yuan) to \$100,000 per bottle, depending on the vintage.

The price of 2008 Lafite fell 45 percent from peak to trough in 2011, according to Liv-ex, with many pointing to a drop-off in Chinese demand.

"I think there's been concern about the integrity of some of those wines in the marketplace. You hear a lot of

stories about the amount of ex-vintage of Chateau Lafite consumed in China is five times the annual total production," Ford said.

Despite the rumors, it's impossible to tell how much bogus booze there really may be in China. Many brands have been affected by counterfeits, with the government detaining six people in 2010 after companies were found producing forgeries of local tipples Dynasty and Great Wall.

Rothschild, the maker of Chateau Lafite, declined to comment.

But some see a positive effect on the real thing at auction houses, Gearing said.

Vintage wines with the best provenance have broken multiple records in Hong Kong in recent years, including a Sotheby's 2010 auction of 1869 Lafite, Acker Merrall & Condit's Don Stott Collection in 2011 and, more recently, Christie's auction of Henri Mayer Burgundy.

This could be part of a wider trend, Ford said, where consumers are becoming more savvy about the wine they buy.

"I think there's a very rapid evolution taking place, so hopefully the days of these crazy copycats and knockoffs are numbered."

Brief

US bank purchase a lie

Wenzhou entrepreneur Lin Chunping has gone from rising star to pariah in two months after claims that he had purchased a bank in the US were discredited.

A private lending crisis that began last year in Wenzhou – long renowned as the cradle of Chinese entrepreneurship – led to the flight of dozens of entrepreneurs and dealt a blow to the city's credibility.

Local authorities praised Lin early this year, calling him the first Chinese person to purchase an American bank and elevating him as role model for local business. Once thought of as the cure, Lin now looks more like a symptom of the disease.

The scandal began with an employment ad printed in the *Wenzhou Economic Daily* on December 22, which said that Lin's company had purchased a bank in the US and was offering high salaries for several management positions. The group also promised that it would provide Chinese employees with green cards.

The ad immediately attracted public attention, and the newspaper printed a laudatory report about Lin's takeover on January 5.

Lin was again honored on February 1 at the World Wenzhou Entrepreneur Conference, where he was praised in front of more than 1,300 businesspeople as proof of what a local business leader said was the famed shrewdness and acumen of the city's entrepreneurs.

During the Chinese New Year holiday, Lin was lavished with attention from media personalities, politicians and businesspeople.

Things took a sudden turn on March 7 when the Changsha-based *Xiaoxiang Morning Post* posted an article skeptical of Lin's achievements.

According to previous reports, Lin bought the bankrupt Atlantic Bank in Delaware in June 2011 for just \$60 million and renamed it USA New HSBC Federation Consortium in November last year. But the newspaper cited confirmation from the Delaware state government indicating that Atlantic Bank never existed and that the registered USA New HSBC Federation Consortium is not allowed to operate as a bank.

Lin initially dismissed the report as a rumor and insisted that the bank was genuinely registered in the US. The following day, however, he admitted that he had exaggerated the story, holding a press conference the next week to apologize.

The local government has appeared reluctant to backtrack on its praise and look foolish – no local media outlets reported on Lin's press conference.

(Agencies)

Related

Super rich snap up European vineyards

Private corporations and wealthy individuals in China are buying European vineyards to capitalize on a growing domestic thirst for foreign wine.

David Guillon of IFL, a Hong Kong-based firm that sells French vineyards, castles and luxury properties, said IFL completed six multimillion-dollar transactions of vineyards in France's Bordeaux region with Chinese investors in 2011.

He expects the number could double this year.

"The demand is getting very huge and it has been a very rapid evolution," said Guillon, adding that 80 percent of IFL's buyers in Asia come from Hong Kong and China.

Cash-rich Chinese investors are keen to profit from the country's growing love of wine – imports of bordeaux wines and consumption in the middle kingdom soared 110 percent in 2011 – by transforming chateaux into luxury resorts complete with Chinese restaurants, golf courses and French gardens.

French vineyards can range widely in price, Guillon said, pricing the 400-500 chateaux available for sale between \$2 million (12.6 million yuan) and \$500 million.

Chinese investors have tended to buy "smaller ticket" vineyards, as opposed to institutional European and private investors who buy properties worth more than \$100 million, he said.

But he expects Chinese buyers to rapidly move into a higher price range in the coming year.

(Agencies)

Joshua Bell: Violinist, the best job in the world

By Zhang Dongya

Joshua Bell, an American Grammy Award-winning violinist, performed at Beijing's Reignwood Theater on March 18, the fourth time he's performed in China. In cooperation with the China National Prodigies Chamber Orchestra, Bell said he got a much closer look at China this time around.

Working with children

Bell arrived in Beijing on a cold and rainy Saturday. He originally hadn't planned to come, but he had a free week and decided he needed to do something.

That first day, he participated in a rehearsal with the children of the National Prodigies Chamber Orchestra at the Central Conservatory of Music. With Bell was Wing Ho, a well-known director and conductor.

They didn't have much time: the performance at Reignwood Theater was scheduled for the next day. Bell was noticeably jetlagged, but he still rehearsed.

Afterward, even though he was tired, he lit up when talking about the experience.

"They are eager to learn," Bell said about the children. "They can all play instruments, but they're learning how to play with each other, how to follow and how to lead. Compared with kids in America, they seem to be at a very high level."

When asked about their rigorous training schedule, he said, "It shouldn't be too serious or boring. Classical music is not boring. It's exciting and powerful, even more than rock music."

At the concert the following evening, Bell and the children of the orchestra played *The Four Seasons* (Summer) by Antonio Vivaldi. The audience gave them a standing ovation.

The best job in the world

Bell was not born to a family of professional musicians, but everyone in his family could play an instrument. When his parents noticed that he had a good ear for music when he was just four years old, they gave him a violin.

When he was 12, he began to get serious about music. That was the year he met the renowned violinist Josef Gingold – and asked to be his student.

Already in his 70s, Gingold accepted.

"I think he liked me, and he felt he was needed," Bell said. "I was playing well at that time, but I needed to go to the next level, and he was someone could take me there."

"I think he felt a duty to pass on the music."

Bell considers Gingold his "grandfather," because the old master also taught him how to be a good person.

Bell spent several hours a day playing the violin. "Music is about life, so you have to enjoy it full-time," he said. "To be a professional is great. Being a violinist is the best job in the world."

But he added that parents should not force their children to practice

eight hours a day. One of the problems these days is that people worry too much about technique, he said. It's easy, then, to forget about the bigger picture, which is expression.

"Technique is important, but it only serves the music, and it is never the end," he said. "Young violinists need to understand that the story of the music is more important."

A sterling resume

Bell debuted at Carnegie Hall in 1985, and his career has been on an upward trajectory ever since. He has played on national TV in the US, including CBS' *The Morning Show*, and even for Xi Jinping, China's vice president.

When Xi visited Washington DC last month, Bell was invited to perform. He played three pieces: George Gershwin's *Three Preludes*, Pablo de Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen* and Chen Qigang's *Caprice from Zhang Yimou's The Flowers of War*.

Bell, a classically trained violinist, has crossed over into the film industry, too. Regarding Chen's piece, Bell said *The Flowers of War* film crew gave him an outline of the story, and then he tried his best to understand the historic background so that he could channel the proper emotions. He played his own interpretation of Chen's piece for the movie.

In addition to being featured in the film (and the original soundtrack CD), he was listed as a musical consultant.

Bell said the music in the film is beautiful, and he believes it can last hundreds of years.

This wasn't the first time he played for a film, though. He also lent his skills to *The Red Violin*, which won the Oscar for Best Original Score.

In addition, his albums frequently find commercial success. His latest is *French Impressions*, produced by Sony Music, in which he collaborates with pianist Jeremy Denk.

A concert in the subway

Bell participated in a unique experience in 2007 when he played six Bach pieces inside a Washington DC Metro station during rush hour. He had been invited to do this as a social experiment conducted by the *Washington Post*.

"It was a joke," Bell said. But he said he tried to play as if at a concert, in all seriousness. More than a thousand people passed him that day, but they were all too busy to stop to listen.

Some didn't even notice he was there.

Bell said people are now living in a virtual world with phones, email and social networks. There is less interaction with the people around them.



Joshua Bell

Photo by Lisa Marie Mazzucco

Switch off your lights on Saturday for an hour

By Han Manman

Earth Hour, the world's largest voluntary action for the environment, is going to be observed for the fifth year this Saturday in more than 4,000 cities around the world, including 40 Chinese cities.

With the slogan "There's an environmentalist in each of us," Earth Hour 2012 will take place on March 31 from 8:30 to 9:30 pm. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) said it hopes people turn off their non-essential lights for an hour to show their support for environmentally sustainable action.

"This year, WWF will hold a lights-out ceremony at the Great Wall in Beijing with hundreds of volunteers and a number of Chinese superstars," said Allen Chai, senior officer of WWF's Earth Hour China.

This year marks Earth Hour's fourth year in China. Chai said WWF has also launched the official Chinese website earthhour.org.cn, where individuals, companies and government agencies can express their commitment to the environment.

"WWF hopes to motivate everyone to observe Earth Hour and its traditions, especially on environmental change," he said. "We believe that there is an environmentalist in each of us."

For the first time, Earth Hour will extend to space. Dutch astronaut and Earth



Volunteers appeal for a reduction in the use of non-essential lights.

CFP Photo

Hour ambassador Andre Kuipers will, from his post aboard the International Space Station, keep watch over the planet as the lights switch off on March 31, sharing photos and live commentary of his experience via the European Space Agency.

"There is no better way to raise awareness for the future of the most beautiful planet in the universe," Kuipers said.

Chai said Shijiazhuang was the first city in China to respond to this year's Earth Hour call. The city pledges to keep the annual average level of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter to the Grade II standard, notably improving air quality.

Earth Hour was started by WWF Australia in 2007 and has grown into the largest global movement for the

environment led by WWF internationally. Individuals, businesses, communities and governments are encouraged to turn off their lights for one hour on the last Saturday of March every year in a show of support for environmentally sustainable action.

Last year, Earth Hour became the largest voluntary action ever, with participation from 5,252 cities in 135 countries and on every continent.

Brief news

Indonesia opens new Consulate General in Shanghai

In an effort to provide more services to Indonesian citizens in China, the Indonesian government recently inaugurated its new Consulate General in Shanghai.

The new office, according to the Indonesian embassy, is expected to cater to the needs of Indonesian citizens in Shanghai as well as Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces.

According to Indonesian diplomats and citizens in China, there are more than 2,000 Indonesians, mostly students, businesspeople and women married to Chinese and employees of Indonesian companies, living in Shanghai.

Australia to open Consulate General in Chengdu

Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced last week that her government plans to open a Consulate General in Chengdu.

Australia's minister of trade and competitiveness Craig Emerson said the mission in Chengdu will help develop trade partnerships between Australia and China.

China is Australia's largest two-way trade partner, with total trade value of more than 113 billion dollars in 2010/2011. Many Australian companies, including BlueScope Steel, Rheem, ANZ and Cochlear, have set up branches in western China.

Chile promotes blueberry arrival

An official ceremony to celebrate and promote the entry of Chilean blueberries into the Chinese market was held last week at the Chilean embassy in Beijing.

"Chile is the first country authorized to export blueberries to China, and given our condition as producer and exporter of this fruit from the Southern Hemisphere, it is a natural complement to Chinese production," said Miguel Canala-Echeverria, Chilean Exporters Association general manager.

"This condition will permit Chinese consumers to have fresh blueberries practically during the whole year, which will also contribute to increased knowledge and consumption of this fruit not only during winter time but also in the summer," he said.

(By Han Manman)

'UK NOW' to bring best of British culture to China

By Liu Xiaochen

The British Council will hold the eight-month arts festival UK Now in China starting next month, giving locals in 15 cities the chance to participate.

Among the hundreds of activities are exhibitions of visual arts and photography, concerts of classical and pop music, and films, drama and fashion shows. The best new British artists from many fields will come to China for the festival, making it the largest British arts festival this country has ever seen.

Highlights include "1948-2012 British Design Exhibition" from Vitoria and Albert Museum, showing the achievements of the British creative field over the past 60 years, and an exhibition about the history of China, organized by the British Museum, Vitoria and Albert Museum and National Museum of China.

"We are very glad to organize the exhibition," said Neil MacGregor, curator of the British Museum. "This is an outstanding achievement in our history."

Besides those large-scale exhibitions, more activities are designed to highlight British culture, such as selected shows from the annual Edinburgh Arts Festival, acts from dance troupes and concerts by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

In the first week of April, there will be five activities held in Beijing. Three of them are the exhibitions of visual arts, Tony Cragg sculptures and drawings, "It Means Nothing To Me" by Susan Philipsz and a Clive Barda Retrospective Pho-

tographic Exhibition called "EXPOSURE!" The remaining two activities are related to music, including Philharmonia Orchestra China Tour and Menuhin & China, the opening concert of Menuhin Competition Beijing 2012.

China Now, the largest Chinese arts festival, was held in the UK in 2008, the year Beijing hosted the Olympics. This year, with London hosting the Games, the UK is returning the favor to give Chinese people a comprehensive understanding of British arts and culture.

Hobbyist club turns ideas into robots



Photos by Derrick Sobodash

OpenDrone's members meet every week to build simple machines and robots. Jose Galvez (above) shows a Wi-Fi car based on DFRobot's Turtle kit.

By Derrick Sobodash

Most Beijingers hire an ayi to take care of their plants when they leave town. OpenDrone members build robots.

Jose Galvez, a 27-year-old Spaniard, might be the first Beijinger with a robotic garden in his bathroom. The maze of hoses and moisture sensors is connected to a hacked-up wireless router that lets Galvez adjust the lighting and watering of his plants from any Internet-enabled device.

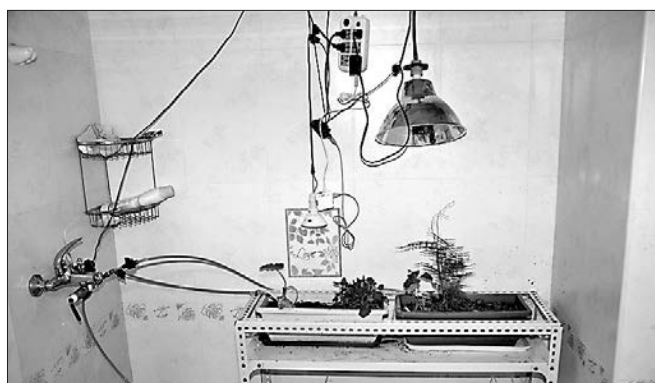
He calls it the "Garduino" – a nod to the open source technology at its core: an Arduino open source single-board microcontroller.

Galvez moved from Madrid to the Huilongguan community of Changping District three years ago to "live in China and play with robots." Today, he does this every week with his friends at OpenDrone, a new open source hardware and robotics group he helped found.

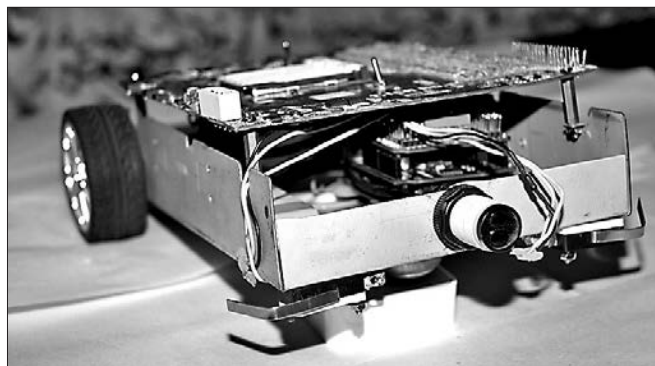
OpenDrone has been meeting on Thursdays in Haidian since November. Its core projects are a flying quadcopter, a four-propeller flying device, and a robotic car controlled over Wi-Fi.

But the group has a greater purpose of helping members learn the basics of electrical and digital design and encouraging them to share their experience and ideas in the spirit of open source hardware.

Like open source software, open source hardware projects are unencumbered by pat-



Galvez's Arduino-powered indoor garden



A work-in-progress original Wi-Fi car that can map floors.

ents and provide users with the source code, schematics and mechanical drawings necessary to copy, modify, adapt or improve any design.

OpenDrone has its roots in an earlier electronics club, the Quadcopter Group, started in 2008 by Ollo Schwan and Daniel Koch, two IT professionals from Germany who met through the Beijing GNU/Linux User Group.

"We made a very good start with pretty basic electronics," says Schwan, a 45-year-old IT manager of GNU/Linux systems. "We didn't just focus

on our own education, but on showing people that they could do these things on their own."

Over the years, the group spoke at several universities about open source hardware and demonstrated its designs, including a work-in-progress quadcopter and an automatic Morse code transmitter and interpreter.

However, the group's activity began to stagnate when several of its core members moved out of the capital.

Galvez and Samuel Huang, an embedded platform developer who had been involved

in the original Quadcopter Group, decided to restart the project and move it from the Dongzhimen area to Haidian District with their friends Tonghui and Du Weihua, two open source hardware fans who volunteered their work space for the first meeting.

That meeting attracted numerous new participants from the local IT community, including Bobo Zhuang, the co-founder of DFRobot, a Beijing-based company that develops and manufactures open source hardware for hobbyists.

Zhuang was so taken with the project that he completed the frame and motor controller for the group's first new quadcopter on his own and began opening the DFRobot office for its meetings in February.

Unlike many IT-related groups in town, OpenDroid's meetings are lively and talkative, drawing crowds of six to 10 people from varied backgrounds.

The group's next step will be developing a new flight controller for its quadcopter using an ARM Cortex-M3 CPU, Huang says. The part will be used to ensure their quadcopter flies level and stable, compensating for gravity and wind.

"[These] open source hardware projects ... are important because they give people with low incomes and little access to education a valuable chance to learn," Schwan says.

And that's why Galvez sees China and hobbyist electronics as a perfect match.

Pre-assembled controllers like the Arduino are comparatively expensive in Europe and the Americas, he says. What could cost as much as 40 euros can be purchased in China for as little as 125 yuan. The difference in price becomes even more pronounced when shopping for simpler things, like chips, capacitors and resistors.

"If more people can have access to this kind of information, it would be so good," Galvez says. The basics, he says, are simpler than they appear and can empower people to solve problems and build simple machines to improve their lives.

"[Electronic design] is just a way of interfacing the cyber world with the real world."

He plans to organize a robot battling competition to promote hobbyist robotics and open source hardware in the capital.

But while battling robots may be cool, open source hardware is about grander goals.

"Robots are just what make people talk. The real thing is understanding that the little board you have in your hands is everywhere in your life. And you can do just about anything with it," Galvez says.

The only limit is imagination.

Meeting information:

When: Thursdays at 7 pm

Where: Room 2204, Building 7, Jinqiu Homeland, Haidian District

Email:

opendrone@googlegroups.com

Sharing is caring when it comes to taxis

By Wu Tong

Carpooling should be the antidote for worsening traffic, the Beijing Municipal Transportation Law Enforcement General Team said on March 22.

According to the taxi management department, Beijing has allowed passengers to share taxis for 10 years. The regulation has been re-released for citizens who are not familiar with the policy, as taxi sharing doesn't seem popular in the city.

Taxi Pool Policy

There are some guidelines for taxi pooling though.

- Multiple passengers can be picked up.

- The first passenger should get dropped off first.

- Taxi fare, including fuel surcharge, should be shared.

According to the regulation, each passenger should pay 60 percent of the fare, which decreases the expense of the individual passengers but increases the income for the driver.

If all passengers are going to the same place, at most two receipts can be given.

Drivers' opinion

Taxi drivers generally support the policy, but say



Some companies are developing softwares to make ride-sharing easy.

CFP Photo

they prefer passengers figuring out payment before getting on.

Yu Kai has been driving a taxi for twenty years. He said the policy should be publicized to more people so that passengers don't rely on drivers to be mediators.

Pickride arrives in Beijing

As more people are becoming aware of the convenience of carpooling, Ye Jianfei, who has an MBA from the Uni-

versity of North Carolina, created a smart phone application called Pickride, which is now being widely used in Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Pickride lets users choose their carpools. Users must register their real name, email address, phone number and photo in order to guarantee credibility. After successfully participating in a carpool, the user will gain a point.

Car owners should also register their car type.

Detailed information like brand, size, license plate number and color are needed so that passengers can easily identify the car.

Pickride also includes freight transport. Users can choose the category on the menu.

The registration agreement on Pickride provides more details, hoping to minimize possible conflicts among users. The application is available both on the iTunes store and the Android market.

Traditional cultural activities for Tomb Sweeping Day



By Annie Wei

The upcoming Qingming Festival, or Tomb Sweeping Day, is a traditional holiday in which people pay respect to the dead.

Daguanyuan Park will provide free tours for visitors, with highlights including narrators and performers on stage dressed up in traditional costumes to perform scenes from classic literature such as *Dream of the Red Mansion*.

Daguanyuan

Where: 12 Nancaiyuan Jie, Xuanwu District

Open: 8 am - 6 pm
Tel: 6354 4994

CFP Photo

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyi@ynet.com

My company needs to mount arms for our computer monitors. How do I find the necessary parts?

This is quite hard to find in Beijing since few companies supply them. But you can try Limingrongsheng Company in Haidian District. It sells single, dual and multiple monitor arms featuring a lift-and-pivot mechanism, which allows users to easily reposition the monitor's height. The devices are available in black and silver. Call the company at 8277 0170 or check out its website, bjrosn.com.

I studied porcelain throwing and firing for a few months in my home country and want to continue it in Beijing. Are there any ceramic studios in town offering pay-as-you-throw service?

There are a few porcelain shops where you can do this, but most of them are operated by non-professionals. If you want professional guidance, Yilie Ceramic Studio near Xidan commercial district may be for you. It provides various porcelain do-it-yourself services, such as making vases, cartoon sculptures and cooking ware. Customers can work on their own or take a one-on-one class. Its teachers are renowned local ceramic artists. For more information, call 13051513511 or visit yltb.net.

My boyfriend is taking a flight to Jinan, Shandong Province for business. But a couple of days ago, he injured his leg and now has difficulty walking. Can the Capital Airport provide him assistance?

The airport offers assistance to ailing passengers or those with disabilities at all of its three terminals. Staff members at the service center will accompany and assist the passenger from check-in to boarding. Terminal 3 also provides free wheelchairs for use within the airport. Passengers can make a booking for whatever service they need at the Passenger Service Center on the second floor of Terminal 3. Call the center at 6454 1111 for more information.

(By Wei Ying)

Fashion, style and

By Huang Daohen

Londoners and New Yorkers may not have the mood for a Fashion Week thanks to the debt crisis, recession and high rate of job loss.

But the climate in Beijing, capital of a country with 1.3 billion willing buyers, is more festive, with the opening of this year's China Fashion Week last Saturday.

For the savvy fashion houses and top designers from across the globe, the week offers a chance to solidify their presence in the world's most promising market.

Capital's

Models showcase designs on the catwalk as part of OudiFu Collection at Beijing Hotel on March 27

CFP/Getty Images



Where are the stars?

For most viewers, a fashion show is all about the stars in their chic clothes. However, few have been sighted in the front rows at this year's China Fashion Week.

The event, which ends Sunday, has attracted more than 40 known designers from home and abroad to show their 2012-2013 Fall-Winter Collections in a series of 50 catwalk shows.

It also includes several design contests to discover up-and-coming fashion talents and several forums for industry insiders.

"During the last 15 years, China Fashion Week has become a world-renowned platform for design and brand promotion," said Li Dangqi, the event's president. "We welcome designers and all who work in the fashion sector to join us."

The stars didn't get the message.

As of press day, the biggest to appear this year has been Hong Kong actor Shawn Yue, who presented several creations by domestic menswear brand Mark Fairwhale.

Domestic actors Wang Xuebing, Du Chun and Ren Quan showed up at the press release. Actress Yu Na and Jin Haixin also attended one of the shows, but their names were far less known than those spotted at the front row at the recently-completed Paris Fashion Week.

Though Zhang Ziyi and Gong Li attended one of the first shows during Fashion Week, their appearance may not have been their own idea.

"Top stars are always 'invited' by the brands themselves," said Julia Wu, a fashion critic. "And by invited, I mean the companies pay them a lot of money to come."

"But each brand has a budget," Wu said. A popular actor may charge as much as 100,000 to 300,000 yuan for an appearance, depending on whether their appearance includes interview sessions or modeling.

Wu said that although popular stars compete to appear at international fashion weeks in Paris, London and New York, the only reason they come to China Fashion Week is to earn some quick money.

Wu, a senior editor at *Vogue*, said she doesn't attend China Fashion Week either.

"The collections just are not attractive enough," said Wu, who has recently returned from fashion weeks in Paris and New York.

"After being surrounded by brands like Dior and Hermès, domestic brands like Red Dragonfly and Bosideng do not stand a chance," she said.

"The country's fashion industry is immature, and its influence is much weaker than that of foreign labels," she said.

Foreign brands wow China

But things are getting better, said the event's president Li.

"When China Fashion Week started in 1997, the only people attending the show were dealers and buyers," Li said. "Now, global designers, fashion critics and fashion lovers are here."

Global brands seem to agree. The catwalk at the Beijing Hotel, Fashion Week's main exhibition site, brought in two designers from Europe on Monday.

Marc Cain (MC) is one of Germany's best-known designers and already sells its ready-to-wear garments in the China World Shopping Mall.

MC introduced two lines of her Fall/Winter 2012, MC Collection and Sports, which focus on versatility.

"We aim at making supermoms and career women look good, whether they're in the office or relaxing with the family," said Karin Veit, who's been creative director of Marc Cain since 1975.

Actress Li Xiaoran, presenting the brand in a collection of green and orange, agreed.

"German products are renowned for rigorous design and quality. As a customer, I've always found German fashion products exquisite and comfortable," she said.

The Italian brand Cadenot for inspiration to impress. It defines its collections as a style of the ancient civilization.

"We hope the concept of Chinese consumers," said Cadenot's Chinese representative.

"As a booming fashion market, China is drawing global attention. People have acquired a new attitude. We are optimistic about the future."

Zhao's hope is shared by many other fashion brands.

"Fashion Week has become a platform for consumerism in China," said Li. "International brands have a need to solidify their presence to a million millionaires."

Going abroad

Fashion Week is an opportunity for international designers to also for local designers to showcase their brands.

Cabbeen, one of the most popular brands at China Fashion Week last Friday night with a "ice world" at D Park won't be an exception.

Under the theme of "winter", models wore slim-fitting

and business

fashion week rocks with a taste of business

9
Center stage



A collection by Sheguang Hu

Cabbeen Chic

A collection by Sheguang Hu

A collection by Sheguang Hu

CADINI
ITALY

Italy Cadini Collection

Zhou Juyan's collection

Cabbeen Chic

Photos provided by the organizing committee of China Fashion Week

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critic Wu said. "More
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develop their brands.
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special catwalk in an
kshop.
world of ice and snow,"
suits as they walked

across a frozen backdrop.

"The inspiration came from a cup of whis-
key with ice. I want to express a positive attitude
in the frozen atmosphere," said Yang Ziming,
founder and chief designer of Cabbeen.

Cabbeen was the first Chinese mainland
brand to hit New York Fashion Week back
in 2007. "We wanted to attract more buyers
through the event. We tried to find more busi-
ness opportunities instead of only flowers," Yang
told Xinhua.

Yang said New York Fashion Week is more
business-oriented, while those in Milan, Paris
and London focus on art.

The fashion show was an opportunity to
reach more people around the world, he said.

"I bet people outside of China must want to
know what China's youth look like and what
their sense of fashion is," he said.

The bet paid off. Yang managed to open
branches in the US after his debut in New York.
And though Cabbeen is made and designed in
China, it's not sold cheaply in the US. Its prod-
ucts are priced about the same as those by Ital-
ian fashion house D&G.

Now, realizing the huge potential market
back home, Yang is again setting his sights on
domestic consumers.

Editors: Yu Shanshan Zhao Hongyi Designer: Yang Gen

BEIJING TODAY

The last master who paints horses

By Charles Zhu

When Liu Boshu enrolled at the Central Academy of Fine Arts to study under Xu Beihong, a French-trained master of horse paintings, he did not expect to one day become a famous horse painter himself.

Today, Liu's ink and brush paintings of horses are exhibited by museums in Japan, Germany, the UK, Canada and the US.

Horses have long been one of the most important and challenging subjects of Chinese painting. The list of masters who have painted horses spans more than 1,000 years, with names like Cao Ba and Han Gan of the Tang Dynasty and Li Gonglin and Zhao Mengfu of the Song and Yuan dynasties.

When painting horses, ancient masters intended to advertise their skills and exhibited their finest brushwork and attention to detail.

Xu Beihong reformed the traditional method by paying more attention to sketches and combining Western realism with the more traditional free splashes of ink. This made his horses appear both real and lively, and imbued them with the spirit of his brush.

Liu seemed predestined to become a master horse painter.

As a country boy in Yongxin, Jiangxi Province, he

drew horses for fun. One day, he stumbled on an album of Xu Beihong's works at the local store. Since he could not afford the book, he went to the store every day and tried to copy the paintings of horses collected in the album. He taught himself to paint in Xu's style and held a solo exhibition in his hometown.

Eventually, Liu worked up the courage to send his paintings to Xu, then a professor at the Central Academy of Fine

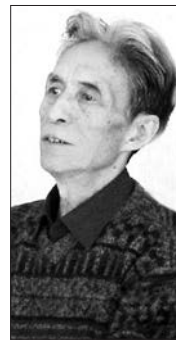
Arts in Beijing.

To his surprise, Xu answered.

Xu advised Liu to observe horses carefully and study how they appeared in nature. Nature, he said, is the finest painting instructor. The secret is to only focus on the essence and look past the details.

On one of Liu's paintings, he left a note: "I see a great future ahead."

As a junior high graduate, Liu applied to the Central



Liu Boshu

Academy of Fine Arts in 1950 and was admitted at the extraordinarily young age of 16. He was the youngest of Professor Xu's students and was in the last class before Xu stopped teaching any.

After three years, Liu graduated from the academy and was given a teaching position. That was when his artistic career began.

He decided to focus on painting horses. Whenever he went to the countryside, his first stop was the stables to observe horses and speak with their riders. In Xinjiang, he rode horses on the grasslands every day and tried to understand their nature and the way they react. He did a great number of sketches and created the early drafts for much of his work.

Liu, now the vice president of the Chinese Association of Artists, always remembers what Xu told him: "Pay attention to all of your works — even unsuccessful paintings have their own merits."

He has inherited Xu's technique for portraying horses and renders them with an

even wilder and freer spirit.

He particularly likes to portray groups of horses. "Groups can best reflect the collective spirit," he said. His horses are strictly structured, galloping swiftly in a graceful and yet terrifically powerful sweep. Their spirited dynamism and force is so soul-stirring that you may feel that they are right running onto you in their multitudes.

Apart from the skills he learned from Xu, Liu has developed a style of his own with rhythmic lines and a sentimental language of ink. If Xu's horses can be compared to the running hand of Chinese calligraphy, Liu's are more like cursive.

In commenting on Liu's paintings, Cai Chao, president of the Jiangxi Academy of Arts, said Liu personifies horses as proud, dynamically active and fully confident of themselves.

In spite of his success, Liu remains modest and unspoiled with a simple appreciation for pure, good art and kindness to up-and-coming artists.



Asia's top art to show at Art HK 12



Self portrait

By Zhang Dongya

Back for its fifth year, Art HK 12, the Hong Kong International Art Fair, opens May 17 at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC).

Art HK 12, sponsored by Deutsche Bank, features a line-up of 182 exhibiting galleries from 30 countries that shows the best in worldwide contemporary art.

Leading galleries returning from across Asia include Long March Space and The Pace Gallery from Beijing; Ben Brown Fine Arts and Hanart

TZ Gallery from Hong Kong; Anna Schwartz Gallery from Melbourne; Nature Morte from New Delhi; Kukje Gallery and PKM Gallery from Seoul.

The Fair will also host some of the most prestigious galleries from the US and Europe, including the following from London: Sadie Coles HQ, Stephen Friedman

Gallery, Hauser & Wirth and Simon Lee Gallery. Other notable galleries include Acquavella Galleries, Marianne Boesky Gallery, Galleria Massimo de Carlo and Leo Castelli Gallery.

Art HK 12 will continue the ASIA ONE section established at the fair last year. Forty-nine galleries from across Asia will exhibit works by artists of Asian origin. ASIA ONE offers an international platform to Asian artists and their galleries and provides a unique opportunity for visitors to experience a diverse view of the Asian art scene.

The fair will further its role as a platform for cross-cultural exchange by helping to pair up interested galleries for cultural exchange and to share practical knowledge about operating a gallery in their respective territories.

Art HK 12 will also include the ART FUTURES, which presents 35 of the world's most exciting young galleries and showcases works by emerging artists from around the globe. The 2012 ART FUTURES prize will be awarded to one

artist featured in the section.

"We are delighted once again to welcome such a high caliber of art from around the world to ART HK 12," said Magnus Renfrew, director of the ART HK fair.

Also on show this year is the return of ART HK Projects, led by experienced director, art curator and advisor to international biennial fairs Yuko Hasegawa.

"We look forward to seeing the very best in both Eastern and Western contemporary art come together at this year's Art HK," said Michael West, Deutsche Bank's head of communications for Asia Pacific.

Since its inaugural year in 2008, Art HK has attracted a rich mix of international galleries, collectors, curators and museum directors, making it the top art fair in Asia.

ART HK has been praised for its commitment to emerging art-world talent and recognised for developing the regional art scene and attracting some of the most prestigious galleries in the world.



The Geometry of Pleasure

“It is really fun to be a filmmaker – to create however I wanted. Film should always be like this.”



Banned filmmaker Lou Ye returns

By Zhang Dongya

Lou Ye was banned from making films for two years when he released *Suzhou River* in 2000.

He was banned for another five years when he submitted *Summer Palace* to the 2006 Cannes Film Festival without the approval of government censors.

With the second ban expired, it appears his spring is coming.

Lou held his first film exhibition at Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) this month. It was the first time many of his films were screened anywhere on the mainland.

His newest film, *Mi*, is expected to be released in July, and will be the filmmaker's first in the Chinese market in 10 years.



Lou Ye, born in 1965, is a Chinese director in the “Sixth Generation” of Chinese cinema. Born in Shanghai, Lou studied film at the Beijing Film Academy.

His first film, *Weekend Lover*, was shot in 1993 and released in 1995. He found international fame when his film *Suzhou River* won the Tiger Award in 1999 at the Rotterdam International Film Festival.

Last Sunday, Lou Ye, together with Zeng Jian, a photographer, and Zhang Xianmin, a professor at the Beijing Film Academy, attended UCCA's Filmmaker Forum.

The forum was the final event in Lou's film exhibition at UCCA.

The exhibition, which began last Tuesday, included screenings of five films: *Suzhou River* (2000), *Purple Butterfly* (2004), *Summer Palace* (2006), *Spring Fever* (2009) and *Love and*



Bruises (2011).

His two earlier films, *Jeopardized Girls* (1994) and *Weekend Lover* (1995), were not included since he did not recognize them as he was not allowed to control the final edit.

When Lou was banned from directing for a second time in 2006, he began to seek support from Hong

Kong and abroad.

The ban failed to prevent him from working, and he shot two films during those years: *Spring Fever* and *Love and Bruises*.

Spring Fever tells the story of a gay man in Nanjing and won Best Screenplay at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival; *Love and Bruises*, produced in coop-

eration with a French actor and shot in France, played in French theaters last year.

But these films have remained inaccessible to Chinese cinema-goers.

“The two films filled up the entire five-year period when you add up pre-production, shooting and editing. Bans are never a good thing, but in this case it gave me a chance to do

something positive,” Lou said.

“I had nothing to worry about – I didn't have to submit my films to the censors, and I could shoot whatever I wanted,” Lou said. “It was really fun to be a filmmaker – to create however I wanted. Film should always be like this.”

Lou is now 37 and shot his first film in 1990, making him part of the “Sixth Generation” of Chinese directors.

His films' erotic narration and political background show Lou's concern for marginalized people and their living conditions.

“Shooting a film is a complicated process, and one that is all the more difficult when certain things are forbidden. But all these challenges are just ways of testing whether a film is really worth making,” he said.

When discussing the banned film, Lou said he wanted to explore many things in it, including college life, politics and sex. “I wanted to tell what it was like to live at that time – about my dorm and my college and the people who were there,” Lou said. “I shot the film in 2004, and I thought I had to make it, otherwise I would forget the old days.”

Lou Ye on filming technique

Although Lou's films have never played in Chinese theaters, his work has many followers.

Students and filmmakers attended the forum to ask Lou about his technique and how an art house director can assert himself and survive in the market.

Lou said that although he always ensures that he has full control over each of his films, “film is a cooperative process and the producer's opinion and others' suggestions are important. A finished work is the product of collective decisions,” he said.

One of the last discussions he had with contributors while editing *Suzhou River*,

for example, lasted 72 hours.

Lou said editing is especially tedious, and that he usually wants to give up when halfway complete. “It's normal to get tired of editing. The thing that helps drive you forward is the belief that the good, complete film is already there – you just have to find it,” he said.

Working on low-budget films gives Lou less pressure, and that is one of the reasons he prefers to work on independent film. “You can film what you want – that is important,” he said.

He said he hopes his banned films, such as *Suzhou River*, can be reviewed again for screening on the mainland.

“Each era has a different

standard for film censorship. What was censored once might be permitted only five years later. I hope the good films of the past can have a chance to be screened in our cinemas,” said Zhang, the professor from Beijing Film Academy.

Casting was another topic. The young actress Hao Lei, famous for her appearance in Lou's *Summer Palace*, will play the female lead in the new film *Mi*. The male lead of *Mi*, Qing Hao, previously acted in Lou's *Spring Fever*.

Some in the audience noted that Lou has a tendency to cast the same or similar people in his lead roles.

Lou said he didn't intentionally reuse the same actors, but that all the actors

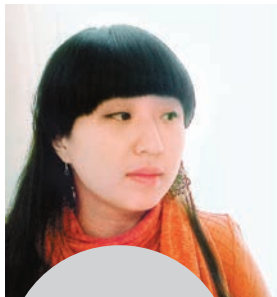
he uses are ones he finds “charming” in life. “Their temperament fits my films very well,” he said.

During filming, he also insists on holding his camera in hand rather than using a tripod or rolling mount.

“It's how I can catch the best performance of actors. I don't want to limit them to a certain working area. This way, they can go wherever they think they should instead of worrying about restrictions like the camera or lighting,” Lou said.

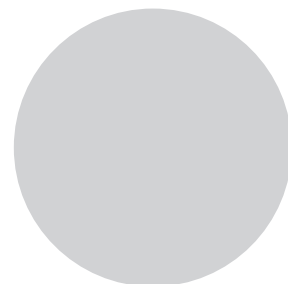
Lou said the best and most immersive films come about when directors put their attention to techniques and skills aside.

“A good film has a life of its own,” Lou said.



Artist Qu Wenqian

Colorful art for home décor



By Annie Wei

More and more young Chinese are hanging works by modern artists in their apartments instead of traditional Chinese water and ink paintings.

This week, *Beijing Today* recommends paintings from Qu Wenqian, an artist and teacher at the China Academy of Fine Arts. Her drawings from 2009 to 2010 are currently being exhibited at UATown gallery at The Place.

These dark blue paintings are between half and one square meter (though the paintings are round), suitable for the bedroom to create a dreamy ambience.

"This series started when I was in a difficult time in my life, and I was reading the book *Buddha Speaks Amitabha Sutra*," said Qu, a Buddhist.

In one part of the book, the

author describes "the color of the sky, a big pool decorated with jewels," Qu said. "The text gave me beautiful images."

She set out to paint images of singing birds, piles of jewels, red Mandala fading into white after crossing a river, and depictions of the struggle between love, hate and other emotions.

Qu said she worked slowly, not only because she was busy with school, but because traditional oil painting is time consuming.

"You need to paint the colors again and again to achieve rich texture," she said. "I also did a lot of experiments to get the right colors."

UATown

Where: B134, south street of The Place, 9 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: Until April 30, 10 am – 8 pm

Photos provided by Qu Wenqian

Foodies' recommendations for spring

By Annie Wei

It's only appropriate that the new season would bring with it an appetite for new things. This week, we recommend a great place for diners to eat out, a cake store for afternoon tea and a company that delivers imported beer.



Alaskan king crab and peanut salad
Photos provided by Grill 79

Spring menu at Grill 79

By Annie Wei

In the increasing competitive dining market, many nice restaurants have to update their menu every quarter so that customers can eat seasonally.

Grill 79's recharged menu offers several new items for diners. For appetizers, we recommend the crab and peanut salad. It's the first time that the restaurant has paired crab paired with avocado and a citrus flavor, smoked with Mexican pepper sauce.

"The Alaskan king crab is a very rare and fresh ingredient, so I decorated the dish with bright color com-

ponents to create an organic feel," said chef Ryan Dadufalza.

The chef also recommends pork and beans, which has been tweaked from the fall and winter menu: Iberico pork loin is used in the spring and summer.

Iberico is to pork as Hermes is to luxury scarves. The Iberico pigs are raised on 40,000 hectares of Holm oak tree forests in Spain. The meat is rich in protein and healthy fats. Grill 79 might be the first restaurant in Beijing to offer Iberico pork.

Other recommended dishes include roast duck consommé, cured duck breast with hoisin sauce and

crunchy duck skin. The flavor reminds diners of the combination of Beijing roasted duck and Western soup.

We also like its pea shoot and poached egg paired with braised pork cheek with buttery toast and Gruyere. The pea shoots are fresh and sweet, and the poached eggs are young and tender.

Its breakfast items include coffee and toast, frozen cereal and milk. The orange egg is a special creation worth tasting.

Grill 79

Where: Floor 79, China World Summit Wing, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am - 9 pm

Tel: 8571 6459



Iberico pork and beans



Cupcake, starting at 25 yuan. CFP Photo

New cake store at Nali Patio

By Annie Wei

As spring has officially arrived, Sanlitun's coffee shops are again buzzing with customers inside and out. Those who need to find a new place that isn't too crowded for afternoon coffee or tea should try Milly's Cake.

The store just opened earlier this month on the third floor of Nali Patio. Owner Emily Long learned how to bake at well-established cuisine schools in Europe and the US, and she proudly displays her baking certifi-

icates on the walls.

The store's specialty is fondant cakes, which are rare in China. It's a cream confection used to decorate cakes for different occasions, especially birthday and wedding cakes. It requires expert technique to stir and incorporate the ingredients just right.

The fondant cake starts from 600 yuan, with price increases for each added layer.

The store also makes cupcakes (25 yuan) with flavors like cheese, choco-

late, blueberry and peppermint; pudding (18 yuan); and brownies and Macaroons (12 yuan). Its menu also offers brunch, afternoon tea and evening drinks.

The cake store is decorated in white, with a few tables and sofa. Wi-Fi is available.

Milly's Cake

Where: C308, Nali Patio, 81 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am - 10 pm

Tel: 5208 6071



CFP Photo

Most beers start at 30 yuan per bottle.

Beers for delivery

By Annie Wei

It's the season for drinking cold beer and eating kabobs. Although local beer is cheap, it's always nice to indulge in some quality imports every now and then.

You can find more than 100 kinds of imported beer at The Drive Thru, a new store that specializes in imported beer delivery.

It has brands from Belgium, Germany, Russia and Ireland, including

Lindemans, 1664 Blanc, Duvel and Hoegaarden.

Although it is located in hollow Sanlitun Soho, you don't need to visit the place because the store provides delivery. Most beers start from 30 yuan per bottle, cheaper than what you'd find at a bar. If your bill exceeds 200 yuan, they'll deliver for free within Chaoyang district. If you live in other areas, the fee is 20 yuan.

The store carries homemade herbs and special salt, such as spicy and tomato-flavored varieties.

The Drive-Thru

Where: 3rd floor, No. 5 Mall, Sanlitun Sohu, Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am - 10 pm from Sunday to Thursday, 10 am - midnight on Friday and Saturday

Delivery hotline: 13911136564

Dining



New Happy Valley Chinese Restaurant

Happy Valley has a new venue and new look with passionately created traditional cuisine.

The restaurant has moved to the second floor, where it will continue to offer business lunch packages to meet travel needs.

The business set lunch includes Cantonese barbecued pork rice, chicken with soy sauce rice, roasted goose rice and two other barbecue and rice combinations. Guests can select a main course, the soup of the day and a fruit platter.

The dim sum buffet menu includes traditional small bites, pan-fried delights, daily specials and desserts.

Where: Happy Valley, Swissotel Beijing, 2 Chaoyangmen Bei Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Business set lunch, Monday to Friday, 11:30 am – 2 pm; Dim Sum, Monday to Sunday, 11:30 am – 2 pm

Cost: Business set lunch, 78 yuan, dim sum buffet 88 yuan

Tel: 6553 2288 ext. 2146 or 2157

Knuckle and beer at Hopfenstube

Finish your weekend with crispy pork knuckles and two 500-milliliter bottles of Hopfenstube's own micro-brewed German beer.

Where: Hopfenstube, Crown Plaza Beijing Chaoyang U-Town, 3 Sanfeng Bei Li, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 30, Sundays, 11 am – midnight

Cost: 198 yuan

Tel: 5909 6683



Event

Every Saturday – China Through Cinema

Culture Yard's Chinese Movie Night introduces important directors and major trends in Chinese cinema from the last three decades and aspects of modern and contemporary life throughout the Chinese-speaking world.

Come April 7 to see Ang Lee's *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994) starring Sihung Lung, Yu-wen Wang and Chien-lien Wu.

On April 14, Culture Yard will show *Deadly Delicious* (2008) by Zhao Tianyu and starring Francis Ng, Jiang Yi Yan, Yu Nan and Zhu Yu Chen.

Dumplings Three Extremes (2004) by Fruit Chan plays on April 21 and stars Miriam Yeung, Tony Leung Ka Fai, Li Bi Hau, Bai Ling, Christopher Doyle and Yee Chung Man.

For the last screening of the month on April 28, come see Tsui Hark's *The Chinese Feast* (1995), starring: Leslie Cheung, Anita Yuen, Kenny Bee and Law Kar-ying

Where: Culture Yard, 10 Shique Hutong, Dongcheng District

Cost: 25 yuan

Tel: 8404 4166 (reservation required)

Email: contact@cultureyard.net

Hotel



IHG introduces HUALUXE, hotel brand for Chinese consumers

IHG, the world's largest hotel company, has announced its first upscale, international hotel brand designed specifically for Chinese travelers: HUALUXE Hotels and Resorts.

The name comes from the characters "hua," which refers to China, and "lux," for luxury.

The HUALUXE brand has been developed in response to three core growth opportunities: consumer demand for an upscale international hotel brand that demonstrates pride in Chinese customs and reflects local tradition; the domestic market, which is expected to grow to 3.3 billion travelers by 2015; and the international market, in which outbound trips from China are projected to grow from 10 million to more than 100 million in the next 10 to 15 years.

"Building on our proven ability to build, develop and nurture brands, we

are very proud to be launching HUALUXE Hotels and Resorts – a genuine first for the industry and a unique brand developed by our Chinese team that we know will resonate with the very important, fast-growing, Chinese consumer base," said Richard Solomons, CEO of IHG.

"HUALUXE takes the best aspects of renowned Chinese hospitality and applies IHG's international scale, powerful systems and unparalleled insights into the Chinese market to deliver a traditional high-end consistent experience."

IHG is the largest international hotel operator in China with more than 160 hotels in 60 cities and plans to expand to 100 cities over the next 15-20 years. IHG has signed more than 20 letters of intent for expansion, and plans to open its first new hotel by late 2013 or early 2014.

Swissotel starts vitality program

Swissotel Hotels & Resorts' new activity program continues its belief in vitality.

Since the launch of the new spa & sport brand last year, a greater focus is being placed on giving Swissotel guests better access to healthy lifestyles. This includes a range of activities that guests can do in their rooms, in the gym or outdoors.

The Vitality Program will be implemented in several stages over the course of 2012.

A particular highlight gives guests the opportunity to order gym equipment for their rooms. Guests can get instructions for using a Swiss ball, Aero Step, yoga mats, Thera-Bands or Pilates rings to aid balance and coordination,

increase flexibility and strengthen muscles. Those who prefer outdoor training can use special jogging maps which show planned routes of various distances. The weekly activity program offered by every Swissotel will also include guided walks and jogging tours.

Starting this summer, the hotel chain's cuisine will become even healthier. It will offer a greater selection of light dishes, fresh fruit, low-fat and organic products on its breakfast, lunch and dinner menus. This will also be reflected in the planning of conferences and meetings, with stimulating breaks during which participants can enjoy light and fresh food and beverage options.

(By Zhang Nan)



Fri, Mar. 30

Nightlife

The Rock Night of Aries

As the first sign of the tropical zodiac, Aries is seasonally associated with spring, and according to astrologers represents a strong, sometimes creative thrust and powerful expression of energy. The sign is governed



by Mars, the planet of activity and assertiveness, which astrologers believe adds the traits of competitiveness, impulsiveness and the instinct to act spontaneously. On March 30, Aries will rise as concertgoers converge to experience the passion of five pioneering bands.

Where: MAO Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8 pm – 12:30 am next day

Admission: 60 yuan, 30 yuan for students and Aries
Tel: 6402 5080



Sat, Mar. 31



Indie film

Close Encounter of Mahjong

Similar to the card game gin rummy, mahjong is a game of skill, strategy and calculation, and involves a certain degree of chance. *The Close Encounter of Mahjong* presents the secrets behind the game with wry humor. A part of Chinese traditional culture and way of thinking are shown in this film. In some ways, as the film shows, the square table on which mahjong is played is a representative slice of Chinese culture.

Where: CCD 300 Modern Art and Design Center, 300 Caochangdi, Chaoyang District

When: 2:30-4:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6432 9300

Nightlife

Pirate Radio

Pirate Radio is a young rock band active in Beijing's international youth music scene. Its four musicians are students who attend the International School of Beijing. The band comprises lead vocalist Jaey, lead guitarist Sean, his brother Daniel on the drums and bassist Heon Joon. The band will donate all proceeds from ticket sales to the children of a local orphanage and help music-loving kids form a band of their own.

Where: 13 Club, 161 Lanqiying, Haidian District

When: 9-11 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 8261 9267



Culture Salon

The Analects of Confucius

The Analects is a collection of aphorisms and ideas from Confucius, recorded by his students during the Spring and Autumn Period through the Warring States Period. It is the representative work of Confucianism and continues to have substantial influence on East Asian values.

Lecturer Chen Dalong will lead participants in a reading to find the spirit of

Sun, April. 1

Confucius.

Where: F4, Elementary Educational College of Capital Normal University, 1 Tonghui Temple, Renmin University North Lu, Haidian District

When: Every Sunday until June 18, 1-4 pm

Admission: Free

Mon, April. 2

Film

Intouchables

A French film directed by Olivier Nakache and Eric Toledano, *Intouchables* tells the development of an improbable friendship between Philippe, a wealthy quadriplegic, and Driss, a young man of



Senegalese descent, who is hired as his live-in caretaker. The film is inspired by a true story discovered by the directors in a 2004 documentary. It has become the second most successful French film of all time at French box offices since its release on November 2, 2011.

Where: Weidahanglu Cafe, 2461, F4 SOHO Shangdubeita, 8 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7-9 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5869 0212

Tue, April. 3

Nightlife

Sound of The City - Nucleus/Wu & The Side Effect

Nucleus is a band with extreme passion and rare maturity, singing about the motivations of life. Wu & The Side Effect is a blues band founded in 2003 that combines blues with Chinese folk music.

Where: 2 Kolegas, 21 Liangmaqiao Lu, inside the drive-in movie theater park, Chaoyang District

When: 10 pm – 1 am

Admission: 50 yuan

Tel: 6436 8998



Wed, April. 4

Drama

Inexistent Moment

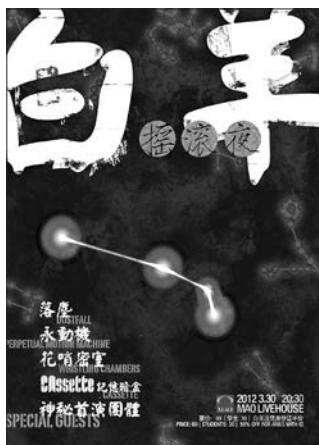
Inspired by different emotions as felt in nine circumstances, director Zhao Miao created this absurdist drama to present life as it is. There is no real plot, only bodily reactions to outside events.

Where: Peking University Hall, 1 Zhongguancun Dajie, Haidian District

When: 7-9 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 6276 8588



Thu, April. 5

Exhibition

The Important Thing is Not the Meat

This exhibition is a major retrospective of Gu Dexin, spanning three decades of the artist's vast and varied output. Called "Gu Dexin: The Important Thing is Not the Meat," it marks the first comprehensive attempt to showcase and elucidate one of China's most complex and original artistic voices. It traces the full arc of Gu's solo career, from his amateur paintings in the late 1970s through his climactic final piece

of 2009, bringing together nearly 300 works. In doing so, it presents Gu's work as an alternative history of the development of contemporary art in China: his early paintings toggle readily among the Western styles then being digested, just as his later performance installations foreshadowed larger debates over acceptable forms and materials both inside the Chinese art world and in the nascent international interpretive community around it.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Daily until May 27, 10 am – 7 pm

Admission: 15 yuan

Tel: 5780 0200



(By Zhang Yuting)

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Next week

Editor: Zhang Dongya Designer: Zhao Yan

BEIJING TODAY

Watch spring flowers blossom in Beijing



By Wu Hao

The festival of flowers, an annual rite of spring, is on its way, and will be a shame if missed. Here are some recommendations for where to get a firsthand look at color returning to the landscape.

Yulan magnolias unfolding their white petals

The Yulan magnolia is one of the capital's first flowers to blossom, with a short florescence of only 10 days in early- and mid-April.

The wall of trees near Zhongnanhai's Xinhua Gate on Chang'an Avenue in central Beijing is bound to attract many visitors.

Near temples like Dajue Temple and Tanzhe Temple, magnolias add to the mystique and beauty of the nearby structures.

Dajue Temple has a famous white magnolia tree that is said to have been planted 300 years ago by an abbot named Jialing. This is where to go if you want to drink tea and idle for an afternoon. The temple holds magnolia and tea festivals every year.

While most magnolias are white, Tanzhe Temple has two magnolia trees that have shades of purple, dating dated back more than 200 years ago. The two trees are called "Two Qiao" after two famous beauties in the Three Kingdom period. Tanzhe Temple is now running a photography competition for magnolias and other spring scenery.

Leshou Hall in the Summer Palace also attracts many visitors with its famous magnolias, plus other flowers like crabapples and peonies. It is said that some of the magnolias were planted by the Empress Dowager Cixi.

Xinhua Gate:

Getting there: Take Subway Line 1 to Tian'anmen Xi station
Admission: Free

Dajue Temple:

Getting there: Take Bus 346 to Zhoujiaxiang, or Bus 633 to Dajuesi.
Admission: 20 Yuan

Tanzhe Temple:

Getting there: Take Subway Line

1 to Pingguoyuan station, then take Bus 931 to Tanzhesi

Admission: 55 Yuan

Leshou Hall, Summer Palace:

Getting there: Take Subway Line 4 to Beigongmen station

Admission: 30 Yuan

Apricot blossoms in mountains

For people who would like to explore the wild instead of jostling others for space to take pictures of flowers in parks, head for the apricot blossoms in the mountains.

The tiny, white apricot blossoms bloom from late-March to mid-April and can be found in several of the nearby mountains. Phoenix Mountain in Haidian District, which is called "small Huangshan of western Beijing," is a great place to go for its picturesque rocks. It's also the nearest place to appreciate apricot blossoms: more than 600 hectares of them.

People can also go to Gubeikou, location of a stretch of the ancient Great Wall. From there, one can walk all the way to Simatai Great Wall, a fascinating route for backpackers.

The Phoenix Mountain

Getting there: Take Bus 346 to Fenghuangling

Admission: 25 Yuan

Gubeikou

Getting there: Take Bus 980 from Dongzhimen to Miyun bus station, then hire a driver to take you to Gubeikou

Admission: 25 Yuan

Other destinations:

Flowering crabapples at Yuan Dynasty's Capital City Wall Ruins Park

Yuan Dynasty's Capital City Wall Ruins Park has more than 2,500 Chinese flowering crabapple trees in dozens of varieties. It holds a flower festival every April when flowers come to full blossom.

Getting there: Take Subway Line 10 to Beitucheng station

Admission: Free

Apart from the park, you can also view flowering crabapples in pri-

vate gardens while strolling along Houhai, such as the Prince Gong's Mansion and the former residence of Song Qingling.

Getting there: Take Bus 13, 103 or 810 to Shichahai

Admission: 20 yuan for the former residence of Song Qingling; 40 yuan for Prince Gong's Mansion

Peach blossoms in Pinggu

As a famous destination for viewing peach blossoms in spring and fruit-picking in autumn, Pinggu will hold an International Peach Blossoms and Music Festival from April 4 to May 7. With nearly 15,000 hectares of peach trees, the mountains in Pinggu will turn into a sea of flowers.

Getting there: Take Bus 852 or 918 from Dongzhimen to Guanzhuang Lukou, then transfer to Bus 20 to Xiaoyuzi.

Admission: Free

Peonies at Jingshan Park

The peonies will bloom in late-April and early-May in Jingshan Park, which has the largest peony garden in the city with more than 20,000 peonies, including 150 varieties, eight colors and nine flower shapes. Among them there are the renowned traditional royal peony and Luoyang peony, as well as the rare Gansu peony and Japanese peony.

Getting there: Take Bus 5 to Jingshan Xi Lu, Bus 58, 60 to Jingshan Dong Lu, or Bus 111, 819 to Jingshan.



Spring comes late this year and the flowers just blossomed from this week.

CFP Photos